

An Issue on Predicate-Clefting: Evidence from Atlantic Creoles
and African Languages [1]

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The following Gullah (GUL), Jamaican Creole (JC), and Haitian Creole (HC) sentences represent a construction pattern traditionally referred to as "Predicate Clefting" in studies of Atlantic Creoles:

- (1a) Dɔ **took** i dɔ took. (GUL)
be talk he/she DUR talk. 'He's really **talking**.'
- (1b) Dɔ **tiif** i tiif mai buk.
be steal he/she steal my book. 'He really **stole** my book.'
- (1c) Dɔ **sik** i sik.
be sick he/she sick. 'He's really **sick**.'
- (2a) A **tiif** Jan tiif di mango. (JC; Bailey 1966:86)
be steal (?) John steal the mango.
(It's that) John **stole** the mango.'
- (2b) A **sik** Samwel sik.
(It's that) Samuel is **sick**.
- (3a) Se **tāde** m tādē Žā vini. (HC; Piou 1982:122-123)
be hear I hear John come.
(It's that) I **heard** John come.
- (3b) Se **malad** tifi-a malad.
be sick child-the sick.
(It's that) the child is **sick**.

[1] I am grateful to: 1) Marta Dijkhoff for making available to me her 1981 Groningen term paper on NP Clefting in Papiamentu, for adding to this some data on predicate-related Clefting, and for commenting on the preliminary draft of this paper; 2) Clive Bowen for going over the Jamaican Creole data with me; 3) Ellen Schnepel for clarifying some of the Guadeloupean Creole data to me; 4) Baizheng Li for helping me better understand Topic constructions in Mandarin Chinese; 5) Ellen Johnson for double-checking the acceptability of the English data and editing this text; 6) Philippe Maurer for helpful comments on the final draft and for providing me with more Papiamentu data; and 7) my Gullah informants, particularly Easter LaRoche for her dedication as a field guide. The Gullah research was sponsored by the National Science Foundation, grant nr. BNS-8519315. I am solely responsible for all the shortcomings. Except where indicated, all non-English data are in near phonetic spelling. Some data are thus transcribed differently from their sources. For instance, proper names and sentence-initial words are capitalized.

The putative **Predicate-Clefting** differs from the more commonly discussed cases of Clefting focusing a NP or PP, as in (4-5), in essentially two respects:

1. The focused constituent is putatively a predicate (corresponding in the English translation to a verb or an adjective) rather than a NP or a PP
 2. The focused constituent does not correspond to a gap in the subordinate clause (from which, according to some more traditional views, it has putatively been extracted); instead, it is repeated as a regular predicate (which may then be delimited by an overt tense marker and/or a negator).
- (4a) A **Jan** wi a taak bout. (JC; Bailey 1966:86)
[It]'s **John** we are talking about.
- (4b) **Ē Jiin** i gon aut wid, **də Beki** i gon aut wid. (GUL)
[It]'s not **Jeanne** he went out with, [it]'s **Becky** he went out with.
- (4c) * A **bout Jan** wi a taak (bout). (JC)
[It]'s **about John** that we are talking.
- (4d) * **Də wid Beki** i gon aut (wid). (GUL)
[It]'s **with Becky** he went out.
- (4e) * A **Jan** wi a taak bout **Jan**. (JC)
- (4f) * **Də Beki** i gon aut wid **Beki**. (GUL)
- (5a) Se **flē** Mari ašte. (HC)
[It]'s **flowers** that Mary (has) bought.
- (5b) * Se **flē** Mari ašte **flē/yo**.
- (5c) Se **ak Mari** Pol prale marye. (Piou 1982:131)
[It]'s **Ø Mary** Paul is-going [to] marry.

More or less as a rejoinder to Manessy (1986a), [2] this paper disputes the position that the cleft-focused constituent in sentences (1) - (3) is a predicate. Adducing evidence from Atlantic creoles themselves and from Lingala and Kituba (in addition to the creole and Kwa data used by Manessy) it argues generally that in both French and English creoles the focused constituent in (1) - (3) is a NP, just as in (4a) - (4b) and (5a). [3] The reason Clefting in (1) - (3) precludes a gap seems to lie in

[2] It is primarily because Manessy (in press) was written earlier that the main position of this paper has to be introduced this way. The conclusions were reached independently, though this paper benefits in not having to duplicate the Kwa data available in Manessy and in having the chance to be more comprehensive. The rest of our evidence differs, and the conclusion of this paper is less reserved than Manessy's.

[3] Manessy applies this position only to English creoles and believes that there is indeed a Predicate Clefting rule in French creoles. It is argued below that he need not have made an exception of the latter.

the syntactic-category difference between the focused constituent and its semantic repetition in the subordinate clause, which has more to do with syntactic constraints on coreferentiality (see Williams 1977) and on Gapping than with Clefting itself. That is, the rule which generates sentences (1) - (3) is the same general rule of Clefting; it need not be designated by a special term. In fact a special term is less needed for this construction pattern than for that which cleft-focuses a PP, as in (5c).

The underlying representation of cleft sentences assumed in this paper is a slight reinterpretation of Chomsky 1977: the cleft-focused constituent is base-generated in its surface-structure position; i.e., in the predicate phrase of the matrix clause (starting with *it is* in English or its equivalent in the PC's) and in the TOPIC position of the embedded clause. The structure of the cleft construction from the focused constituent to the end of the subordinate clause is relative-clause-like (see McCawley, in press); the subordinate clause contains a constituent which is coreferential with the cleft-focus. Just as in a relative clause, special transformations (viz., WH-Formation, WH-Fronting, or Gapping) apply alternatively, determining the structural characteristics of the subordinate clause. [4] It is assumed, as in Mufwene 1986a, that movement to the COMP position takes place only when WH-relativization is involved, as in (6b); no movement need be assumed where the subordinate clause starts with a regular COMP and the coreferential constituent is simply gapped, as in (6a). (Sentence [6b] is actually ambiguous, since it can be interpreted either as a cleft construction or as a regular sentence whose predicate is a complex NP with a relative clause. [5])

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- [4] Evidence for the structural similarity of cleft sentences to relative clauses lies in the fact that they can start with WH[rel] pronouns, they gap in the same way, and, as Piou (1982) observes, they are subject to the same subadjacency constraints. One of the advantages of the underlying representation adopted here over particularly the structure-building hypothesis is the following: their deep structure identifies the cleft-focused constituent immediately, it shows that another coreferential term occurs in the subordinate clause, which provides a structural justification for the transformations which affect the subordinate clause, viz., Gapping, WH[rel]-Formation, and WH-Fronting. Other advantages emerge below in the text and in note 5.
- [5] The main reason why Akmajian 1979 rejects the alternative of base-generating the focused constituent outside the subordinate clause is reflexivization such as in:

(6a) It's **Alice** that John was talking to _____. (McCawley)

(6b) It was a **car_i** which_i John brought _____. (McCawley)

One of the prime justifications for the wide currency of "**Predicate Clefting**" in the creole literature is the general, incorrect assumption in Anglophone linguistics that Clefting affects neither verbs, nor

(i) It's **himself** that he trusts.

While his position solves the problem of reflexivization, it does not handle that of sentences where, e.g., a NP occurs in the TOP position (à la Chomsky 1977) and a WH[rel] occurs in the COMP site. After all, WH[rel] cannot function as a trace, and it is not legitimate to both move a constituent to the TOP site and concomitantly WH[rel]-pronominalize it, nor does it seem consistent within the framework to both move a constituent to the COMP position and attach a WH[rel] pronoun to it (in the way proposed by Byrne [in press]). Akmajian's position also fails to account for another similarity of cleft sentences and relative clauses: the head, which is outside the subordinate clause, is base-generated and binds any other coreferential constituent in the subordinate clause. (See Akmajian and Kitagawa 1976 for this use of "binding"). A seemingly ad hoc solution to the problem of reflexivization is to assume that in sentences such as (i) the cleft-focused NP attracts the [+REFL] feature when its coreferential counterpart in the subordinate clause is gapped.

It is worthwhile emphasizing that, contrary to Knowles 1986, the phrase structures of cleft constructions and relative clauses are only **similar** but not the same. See:

(ii) **it's/se/də/a** [_S, [TOP CLEFT FOCUS] [_S, [COMP] [_S X - COREFERENTIAL CONSTITUENT - Y _S] _S,] _S,]

(iii) **W** - [_{NP} DET [_N, N' [_S, [COMP] [_S X - COREFERENTIAL CONSTITUENT (i.e., NP_{rel}) - Y _S] _S,] N'] _{NP}]

(In Atlantic PC's the COMP is null for cleft constructions; in English this position is filled by **that** or a WH-form.) Note that the heads are only partially alike, particularly in that they are both modified by an S'. However, the head of a relative clause can only be a nominal (N'), including simple nouns, and it forms a complex NP with the relative clause. On the other hand, the head of a cleft construction can be any of a variety of constituents, including NP (but not a simple N'), PP, VP, and S. This head also occurs in the TOP position, which both accommodates the variety of constituents and accounts for the heavy stress on them. In addition, the head and the rest of the cleft construction form a S', not a NP. This analysis of the cleft construction captures its similarity to both the relative clause and other front-focusing constructions such as topicalized and left-dislocated sentences, which position the focused constituent also in the TOP position. Sentence (6b) is ambiguous because it can be analysed as either (ii) or (iii).

verb phrases, nor full sentences, as illustrated by the following English examples from Emonds (1976:133):

- (7a) * It was **(to) buy a new hat** that I wanted. (Emonds)
- (7b) * It's **for Mary to drive carelessly** that upsets Ann. (Emonds)

To begin with, only infinitival verbs, verb phrases, and clauses may generally not be cleft-focused in English. For many native speakers quite a number of **that**-clauses, as in (8e), may be cleft-focused. And, as noted by Emonds himself, verbs, verb phrases, and sentences can be cleft-focused once they are assigned a noun-like status, typically through the gerundive (not the present participial) **-ing** suffix, as in (8a) - (8d). [6]

- (8a) It was **buying a new hat** that I enjoyed. (Emonds)
- (8b) It's **singing** that John does best, not playing the piano.
- (8c) It's **singing** that John does; he neither dances nor roller-skates.
- (8d) It's **John's playing the piano** that Henry hates.
- (8e) It's **that John plays the piano at all** that she could not believe.

As illustrated below, infinitives can be cleft-focused in French, where they are relatively more noun-like than in English (see Mufwene and Dijkhoff 1986), a behavior which is consistent with the thesis of this paper:

- (9) C'est **danser (la rumba)** qu'elle n'aime pas.
It's **(rumba) dancing** that she does not like.

Note that in Atlantic creoles, as in the isolating Kwa languages, where Predicate Clefting has also been invoked, there is little or no inflectional morphology; lexical categorial switches without any morphological reflexes (i.e., zero-derivations) are more the rule than the exception (see Alleyne 1980, Voorhoeve 1981, Sebba 1981 for creoles). Based on sentences (1) - (3) alone, there is thus no more reason for calling the cleft-focused constituent a predicate than there is for calling it a noun. However, there are other considerations which favor treating this consti-

[6] Based on the inflectional discrepancy in (8b) - (8c) between **singing** and **does**, it is tempting to also assume that the clefted constituent is some sort of nominal complement. It is argued below that, tantalizing as it may be, this explanation has little, if any, cross-linguistic support. A more adequate explanation must invoke the principle of anaphora, whereby, in English, **do** is substituted for the original verb or verb phrase in the subordinate clause.

tuent as a NP. The fact that sentences (1) - (3) start with the cleft marker **a** or **se** (a subjectless equative-identificational copula), as in sentences (4) - (5) is consonant with the fact that they receive similar focusing interpretations, in spite of translation problems. Both the structural and semantic similarities of all these sentences certainly support the analysis of sentences (1) - (3) as cleft constructions. The issue actually arises from the fact that no gap (or, as we shall soon see, any other anapohric strategy) is allowed in them:

- (10a) * Də took wi bin ___ baut Jiin. (GUL)
- (10b) * Də sik i ___.
- (10c) * A tiif Jan ___ di mango. (JC)
- (10d) * A sik Samwe ___.
- (11a) * Se tādē m ___ žā vini. (HC)
- (11b) * Se malad tīf-a ___.

It is argued below that the cleft-focused constituent has a nominal status; the ungrammaticality of sentences (10) - (11) must be related to a type-specific constraint which blocks Gapping when the cleft-focused constituent and its coreferential counterpart in the subordinate clause are assigned to different syntactic categories. [7] But let us first see why the cleft-focused constituent must be analysed as having a nominal status.

If the putative Predicate Clefting rule actually focused a verb or a predicate in (1) - (3), it would be somewhat surprising that the latter (as observed also by Piou for Haitian creole) can only be focused alone and not with its tense/aspect markers, as illustrated by the following:

- (12a) Də took i bin took baut Jiin. (GUL)
- (12b) * Də bin took i (bin) took baut Jiin.
- (12c) A tiif Jan ben tiif di mango. (JC)
- (12d) * A ben tiif Jan (ben) tiif di mango. (JC)
- (12e) * A (a) go sik Jan a go sik.
- (13a) * Se te tādē m (te) tādē žā vini. (HC)
- (13b) * Se av malad tifi (av) malad.

[7] The relationship of coreferentiality is of course primarily semantic. Until proof of the contrary, nothing requires that the coreferential terms belong to the same syntactic categories. Evidence for such "sloppy coreferentiality" lies also in sentences like the following, where the antecedent of **which** is strictly not a NP, though it may functionally be assumed to be one:

(i) Mary is sloppy, which keeps many potential dates away.

On the other hand, assuming that the predicate is cleft-focused qua noun, it is easy to explain why it cannot be delimited with tense in the above constructions: NP's are normally not tensed. Likewise, since NP's are not modified by modalities, it is understandable that, as Piou observes, the putatively cleft-focused predicates cannot occur in the TOP site with a modality marker.

In a different respect, since the VP is also a constituent (albeit a verbal constituent), and since other parts of this constituent can indeed be cleft-focused too, as illustrated by (4) - (5), the whole predicate phrase headed by the relevant predicate might be expected to be cleft-focused in the same way (like VP/AP Preposing in English). However, unlike English, where the VP can be clefted or topicalized, provided it is delimited with the gerundive **-ing** suffix (i.e., assigned a nominal status), this does not happen:

- (14a) * **Də took baut Jiin i** (də). (GUL)
* It's talking about Jeanne he was (doing). Cf. 'Talking about Jeanne, he was.'
- (14b) * **A tiif di mango** Jan tiif. (JC)
- (14c) * **A sik** Samwel (a/de).

That constructions (14) are ill-formed is symptomatic of the fact that the cleft-focused constituents are not verbal. Complexity of the cleft-focused constituent has nothing to do with the constraint, since, as is obvious below, complex constituents can be cleft-focused. It is only when they must be interpreted as VP's that the constructions become ill-formed, as again in (15c):

- (15a) **A di mango tiif** Jan ben kech. (JC)
[It]'s the thief of the mango(es) that John (had) caught.
- (15b) **Də dis boi we tiif i buk** Jiin bin də took baut. (GUL)
[It]'s this boy who stole her book that Jeanne was talking about.
- cf. (15c) * **A tiif di mango** Jan no laik. (JC)
[It]'s stealing the mangoes that John does not like.

In fact, since creoles do not use a supportive particle or a verb comparable to English supportive **do**, not even a rule comparable to English VP and AP preposing applies:

- (16a) * **Tiif di mango** Jan ben (du). (JC)
Steal the mango(es), John did.
- (16b) * **Sik** Jiin go (də). (GUL)
Sick, Jeanne will be.

It is also noteworthy that verbs that cannot be used with a nominal interpretation cannot be used in cleft constructions either. For in-

stance, the locative verbs **de** in Jamaican creole and **də** in Gullah cannot be cleft-focused:

- (17a) * **A de** im de a mi yaad. [8] (JC)
It's that he/she is at my house.
- (17b) * **A de a mi yaad** im de (a mi yaad).
- (17c) * **Də də** Jiin də hom. (GUL)
- (17d) * **Də də hom** Jiin də (hom).

It is equally noteworthy that even though a predicate adjective and the degree adverb that modifies it form a constituent, this complex constituent cannot be cleft-focused:

- (18a) * **A veri/tuu sik** Samwel (veri/tuu) sik. (JC)
It is that Samuel is **very sick**.
- (18b) * **Də veri/tuu sik** i (veri/tuu) sick. (GUL)
- cf. (18c) * **A sik** Samwel veri/tuu sik. [9] (JC)
- (18d) * **Də sik** i veri/tuu sik. (GUL)

Yet, as noted above, Clefting affects single constituents, not necessarily single items. Thus, the reason for the ungrammaticality of (18a) - (18b) must be the nominal status of **sik** in the TOP position, which precludes its combining with a degree adverb.

Interesting supportive data for this hypothesis comes from Bernabé (1983:1224). In the French creoles of Guadeloupe (GUAD) and Martinique (MART) the predicate-related cleft-focused constituent can apparently be modified by an adjective, just like a regular cleft-focused noun can, as shown below. (Both sentences are somehow assigned the same idiomatic translation given in [19b]!) Similar evidence cited by Manessy (1986a) (in part from Alleyne [1980:104]) comes from Jamaican Creole, Krio, and Nigerian Pidgin English, as in (19c) - (19e):

- (19a) A/Se pa **ti ba** Pye ba Pol lažã. (GUAD/MART)
(Literally:) It's not **small give** Peter gave Paul money.
- (19b) A/Se pa **ti lažã** Pye ba Pol.
It's not [**a**] **little money** [that] Peter gave Paul.
- (19c) A **wan ple** mi bin [sic] ple. (JC, Alleyne)
I really played. (Lit.: 'It's one play I played.')
- (19d) Noto **komon kray** mi bin kray. (Krio)
I really cried. (Lit.: 'It's not common cry I cried.')

[8] This sentence is acceptable if the cleft-focused **de** is interpreted as the locative adverb 'there' and if the construction is related to the simpler sentence:

(i) Im de **de** a mi yaad. 'He/She is **there** at my house.'

[9] Bowen prefers sentence (18c) with a pronominal, rather than a nominal, subject.

- (19e) Na **bad fait** dem de go fait fo skul. (Nigerian Pidgin English)
It's a bad fight that they are going to fight at school.

In these French creoles, constructions which are akin to cleft sentences apparently allow the predicate-related focused item to be quantified, a behavior which is characteristic of nouns. [10] A similar construction, discussed by Manessy (cited from Taylor [1977:184]), is attested in Jamaican creole too. A Gullah example is added to show how common the construction may be in Atlantic PC's. (The idiomatic English or French translations appear to be misleading in this case.)

- (20a) **Tut pwete** i pwete mwẽ lažã la/a, nu pa bõ zãmi. (GUAD/MART; Bernabé 1983)
A. Quoiqu'il m'ait prêté beaucoup d'argent, nous ne sommes pas de bons amis.
B. Even though he has lent me a lot of money, we are not good friends.
- (20b) **Aal di lie** dem foul-ya lie, dem no kaal fi set. (JC; Taylor)
However much these hens lay, they don't stop to sit.
- (20c) **Ool de holə Jim də holə** ẽ nobodi hie im. (GUL)
As much as Jim was/is hollering, nobody heard/hears him.

Parallel evidence for this comes from Krio. According to Williams 1977, it is not only in cleft sentences that predicate-related focused constituents are used qua NP's. As is obvious in the following examples, the head of the relative clause is related to a predicate (repeated in the subordinate clause) and is delimited with a definite article, as a regular noun would be:

- (21a) **Di ala** we i bin de **ala** wek olman.
the shouting which he PAST PROG shout woke everyone.
His shouting woke everyone up.
- (21b) **Di dak** we di klawd **dak** mek di pikin dem fred.
the darkness which the cloud be-dark cause the child PL be-a-fraid
The blackness of the clouds frightened the children.

This must be related to the general syntactic-category multifunctionality of lexical items in Atlantic creoles. As illustrated in the following sentence, the same form can be used both verbally and nominally:

- (22) Dee ẽ laik de **took** i də **took**. (GUL)
they not like the talk he/she DUR talk
They don't like the way he/she talks.

[10] Manessy equivocates somewhat here, interpreting the first clause of this sentence strictly in terms of its undeniably concessive-adverbial value; he seems to overlook the structural fact that **tut** forms a NP with **pwete** (in the case of my example here).

In any case, cleft-related constructions in African languages support the above hypothesis of the nominal status of the cleft-focused constituent. It is most obvious in languages that have derivational-inflectional morphology, such as Bantu. [11] Thus, in Lingala, and even in Kituba, which has lost many of its inflectional (but not derivational) affixes (see Mufwene 1986b, Mufwene and Dijkhoff 1986), the predicate-related cleft-focused constituent is overtly marked as a verbal noun (with the infinitival prefix **ku-** or **ko-**). To fully appreciate the accuracy of the above observation, it should help to consider sentences (24) in relation to sentences (23), where the tendency in Kituba toward an isolating morphosyntax is seen in its omission of the infinitival prefix **ku-**:

- (23a) Pételo mē(ne) Ø+kúma. (Kituba)
Peter finish arrive. 'Peter has arrived.'
- (23b) Pételo a-út+í *(ko+)kúma. (Lingala)
Peter he+come-from+PERF Infin+arrive. 'Peter has just arrived.'
- (24a) Si *(**ku+**)yíba yáyi ya yánda kē yib+áka bēto zóla vē. (Kituba)
EMPHATIC marker Inf+steal this con. he be steal-HAB we like not
'It's [the fact that he] steals that we do not like.'
- (24b) Ndé *(**ko+**)yíba/*a+yíb+aka óyo yē ayíbaka to+ling+í té. (Lingala)
EMPH Inf+steal/he+steal+HAB this he+steal+HAB we+like+Perf not.
'It's the fact that he steals that we don't like.'
- (24c) **Ko+yíba**/*Ø+Yíba/***A+yíb+aka** ndé to+ling+í té. (Lingala)
Inf+steal/ISTEM/He+steal+HABIT EMPH we+like not.
Stealing we don't like.

The nominalization (through the infinitival prefix) which takes place in, particularly, Kituba is not a rare occurrence. A verb functioning as the complement of another verb must have the infinitival prefix:

- (25) Pételo mē(ne) (*ku)+zol+áka ba+nkēto/*(**ku+**)tóngá ba+ntu.
Pételo finish Inf+like+HABIT PL+woman/Inf+gossip PL+person
Peter likes women/gossiping.

Manessy 1986a adduces evidence from Kwa languages (Yoruba, Igbo, and Baoule in particular) to support the thesis of the nominal status of the cleft-focused predicate-related constituent in English creoles only, an issue to which I return below. The wide distribution of this syntactic strategy puts it in the category of areal features advocated by Gilman

[11] Evidence for the dual status of Bantu class prefixes (including the infinitival prefix) as either inflectional or derivational is presented in Mufwene 1980. In Mufwene and Dijkhoff 1986, it is stated that the Bantu infinitive has a more noun-like status than its English counterpart.

1986 and points to African substrate influence, corroborative at least, in its development in Atlantic creoles. [12]

In his discussion, Manessy makes an exception of French creoles, based on the following sentences which have been attested in the creolized French (i.e., a variety of local French, which is different from French Creole) of Guadeloupe and Martinique. (He cites these sentences, given in the French spelling, from Hazaël-Massieux [1981:59] and Bernabé [1983:1482], respectively.)

- (26a) **Dors** tu **dors**, comme cela. (reproachfully)
sleep you sleep, like that. '[And] you **ARE** sleeping!'
(26b) C'est **parlons** que nous **parlons**.
[It is that] we **ARE** talking.

Manessy identifies the process that is responsible for these constructions as decreolization. While the term "creolized French" may indeed suggest decreolization, it is equally true that it may also suggest imitation of creole grammar by French speakers. (As discussed in Mufwene 1986c, aspirations towards both the acrolect, or lexifying language, and the basilect are equally responsible for phenomena that have traditionally been described as mesolectal.) Actually, Prudent 1981 disputes the correlation of sentences such as cited in (26) with decreolization and the me-

[12] Further evidence in support of the hypothesis of African substrate influence on the development of the predicate-related cleft construction in creoles comes from Koopman 1984, according to which Vata and Gbadi (two Kru languages of Ivory Coast) have similar constructions. Note, however, that, in spite of Gilman's thesis of areal features, some selective principle must still be involved here, quite in agreement with the complementarity of the universalist and substrate hypotheses defended in Mufwene (1986b). In some African languages the cleft marker is preposed to the focused constituent, while in some others it is postposed. Of the Atlantic creoles surveyed by Alleyne 1980, only Palenquero seems to postpose its cleft marker. In a slightly different respect, it is not obvious either that, strictly speaking, all the cleft-related focus constructions invoked from African languages involve Clefting. For instance, Gilman (1986:39) discusses them quite cautiously under the rather vague term of "front-focusing". The following example from his paper seems more to involve Topicalization than Clefting, though it certainly involves nominalization of the verb by prefix-deletion (which is common in a number of Bantu languages):

- (i) ~~Ø~~ **Tal+a** ka+zol+ele ka+tal+a.
see+ending he+want+PERF he-Subjunctive+see+ending
'He [really] wants to see. (Lit.: see he wants he may see.)'

solect; he associates them, instead, with what he calls "interlecte", a variety where the rules responsible for the sentences are neither creole nor French. With regard to the nominal status of the predicate-related cleft-focused constituent, it is very likely that French grammar (as a starting point) or its approximation may impose a reanalysis of the first constituent as a verb. This produces sentences which, in Prudent's own words, are "gauchissements qu'aucune grammaire [créole ou française] ne saurait prédire" (p.30). Thus, Manessy need not have made an exception for French creoles, and it can be stated very generally that

- (27) **(in Atlantic creoles) a predicate-related cleft-focused constituent prototypically has a nominal status.**

Unless the rule which cleft-focuses a PP is assigned a special name, that which cleft-focuses a predicate-related constituent need not be given a special name, either. Note that PP Cleft-focusing is not permitted in some languages, such as Gullah and Jamaican Creole, as illustrated by sentences (4c) - (4d). Even in spoken English, particularly its nonstandard varieties, cleft sentences focusing a NP and stranding a preposition in the subordinate clause (where the coreferential NP is gapped) seem preferred to alternatives with a cleft-focused PP. Cross-linguistically, Cleft-focusing a predicate-related constituent (which is interpreted and/or inflected as a NP) is certainly more common than PP Cleft-focusing. If anything is peculiar, it is certainly the latter construction, and it deserves a special name, since a PP occurs where prototypically a NP is expected. Assuming (as has been the case so far) that the cleft-focused constituent is base-generated outside the subordinate clause, what has been discussed above can be handled in terms of a syntactic constraint, as below, rather than by assigning the construction a name which suggests that it is rather peculiar:

- (28) **In Atlantic creoles (as in African languages), if the (cleft-) focused constituent and its coreferential counterpart in the subordinate clause do not belong to the same syntactic category, the second constituent must be repeated.**

Something else must also be noted: Contrary to what the traditional term "Predicate-Clefting" has suggested so far, Clefting is more constrained in creoles than in English or French. For instance, creoles do not cleft-focus clauses (full or incomplete). Except for the few creoles which cleft-focus PP's too, they try to keep the cleft-focus constituent as close as possible to the prototypic structure of a NP.

As this paper comes to its conclusion, it is opportune to give some brief considerations on a couple of related issues. To begin with, it is worthwhile noting that the analysis proposed here is not unprecedented. Though the evidence for their position is not provided, Li and Thompson (1981:98) observe that when verbs, verb phrases, and clauses appear in the topic position in Mandarin Chinese, they are also used qua NP's. The syntactic strategy of Clefting as described in this paper may thus be a more general, perhaps universal, phenomenon; cross-linguistic differences may regard essentially the specifics of its application in individual languages, particularly the constraints that govern it. **The general, prototypic strategy seems to be that of placing a constituent with a nominal status in the TOP position and a coreferential constituent in the subordinate clause, in a binding relation similar to that of relative clauses.**

Some languages, such as English, French creoles, and Papiamentu, allow for PP's to be assimilated to the nominal constituents; others, such as Gullah and Jamaican Creole, do not. [13] Also, some languages, such as

[13] Papiamentu goes as far as to allow:

(i) Ta **pa bebe awa** kanika ta.

Its drinking water [that] cups are for.

where the purposive subjectless clause [**pa [bebe awa]**] can presumably be treated as a PP. As Philippe Maurer (p.c.) observes, full purposive clauses such as in (ii) also occur as cleft-focused constituents, thus revealing more differences between Papiamentu and other Atlantic PC's:

(ii) Ta **pa nos bebe awa** e glas ta.

be for we drink water the glass be

[It's that] the glass is FOR US TO DRINK WATER.

However, this is not evidence against treating the focused constituents in both (i) and (ii) as PP's. Adverbial clauses introduced by conjunctions (as Maurer identifies **pa** here) have traditionally been assimilated to PP's in transformational grammar (see, e.g., Emonds 1976 for English clauses introduced by **for** and Winford 1985 for **fi**-clauses in JC). In the case of Papiamentu treating the adverbial **pa**-clauses as PP's helps particularly account for their contrast with their counterparts which function as verbal complements below and which, according to Marta Dijkhoff (p.c.), cannot be cleft-focused:

(iia) Mi ke **pa e piki koko**. 'I want him to pick coconuts.'

I want for he pick coconuts.

(iib) * Ta **pa e piki koko** mi ke.

* It's for him to pick coconuts that I want.

In any case, the constraint on the syntactic category of the cleft-focused constituent should perhaps be weakened somewhat to accomodate more variation and other non-verbal categories, considering that,

Chinese, gap the coreferential predicate in the subordinate clause, particularly when in functions as the complement of another predicate; others, like English, anaphorize the verb in this case (viz., its substitution with **do**); still others, the Atlantic creoles for example, require that this constituent neither be gapped nor anaphorized. [14] Based on Manessy 1986b and Seuren 1986, there are also languages, such as the Indian Ocean creoles, which simply preclude any construction involving a syntactically mismatched coreference between the cleft-focused constituent and the predicate in the subordinate clause.

e.g., French and English allow at least some adverbial phrases in the TOP position too. McCawley, in press, gives the following example:

(iv) It's **very carefully** that Marge handled the sulfuric acid.

On the other hand, it is noteworthy that, with the exception of English, languages that cleft-focus PP's are those that do not allow for prepositions to be stranded. In fact cleft-focusing of the PP in English is more common in written standard English than any other variety, where the dominant pattern is, instead, to cleft-focus the NP and strand the preposition. Noteworthy about the Papiamentu sentence is also the fact that the cleft-focused PP is adverbial and not a verbal complement. When the PP in the subordinate clause is not adverbial, there exists the alternative of cleft-focusing a NP and using a resumptive pronoun after the preposition, as illustrated by the following sentence from Dijkhoff, forthcoming:

(v) Ta Maria Pedro a bisa Wanchu ku el a kumpra flor p'e [= pa e]
 be M. Pedro PERF tel] W. that he PERF buy flowers for her
 [It]'s Maria that Pedro told Wanchu that he bought flowers for.

In this particular case the following alternative with a cleft-focused PP is even slightly less acceptable (Dijkhoff, p.c.), suggesting that NP Clefting (which subsumes what has traditionally been discussed as "Predicate Clefting") is the prototypic case:

(vi) ? Ta pa Maria Pedro a bisa Wanchu ku el a kumpra flor.

But the following two alternatives are equally acceptable, which suggests that increased depth of embedding favors NP Clefting (the prototypic pattern) over PP Clefting:

(vii) Ta Pedro Maria a kasa ku ne.
 It's Pedro Maria PERF marry with RP
 Its Pedro that Maria married.

(viii) Ta ku Pedro Maria a kasa.

[14] The only creole exception, to my knowledge, is Papiamentu, which can gap predicate adjectives in the subordinate clause, as below:

(i) Ta **kibrá** e outo ta.

It's [that] the car is [really] **broken**.

The reason for this peculiarity must lie in the fact that in their predicative function Papiamentu adjectives, like nouns, are normally preceded by the copula **ta**. There might, however, be a more adequate explanation for this additional difference between Papiamentu and other Atlantic, French and English, PC's.

The reasons for the above differences (particularly their correlations with other possibly relevant parameters) should be worthwhile pursuing within the context of language typology. [15] Also worth pursuing in the field of typology is the question of whether there are languages that cleft-focus verbs or adjectives qua predicates (i.e., languages that do this in such a way that verbs remain finite and show tense and aspect markers as in the "interlectal" sentences [26]).

Considering the observation made earlier about assigning noun-like features to verbs and VP's in English, the reason why adjectives are neither cleft-focused nor topicalized in this language must be the lack of an inflection similar to the gerundive **-ing** which could assign them a nominal status in the TOP position.

A question of relevance to the present issue is of course what the function of the cleft-focused NP is in the subordinate clause, particularly in sentences (1) - (3), where the subject of the subordinate clause does not seem to be affected and where the predicate either has an object or cannot take an object. [16] This question arises particularly under the assumption that Clefting involves movement of a constituent as suggested by the term preposed used in more traditional analyses since Ross 1967.

For a structure-building approach, according to which the cleft-focused constituent has been extracted from within a non-cleft construction, there is no answer to the question, particularly regarding sentences (1) - (3). Under the analysis adopted here (where the cleft-focused constituent is base-generated in its surface structure position), the cleft-focused constituent has no function in the subordinate clause, but its co-

[15] Byrne, in press, speculates that the reason why the predicate is retained in the subordinate clause of creoles (and presumably of African languages, too) is because it has to assign case to its arguments. This explanation is hard to accept in light of the fact that Gapping takes place in Chinese. Besides, Gapping/VP Deletion could very well take place after case-assignment. Of course this explanation is not consistent with a model that accepts no Deletion transformation; but pursuing this issue is tantamount to beginning another, long digression.

[16] Recall that in the case of the English sentences in (7) - (8), the focused VP should not be interpreted as the object of **do**. There is, indeed, the **do**-anaphor rule which substitutes **do** for the omitted verb to carry tense and aspect markers.

referential counterpart in the subordinate clause plays a function which is strictly clause-determined. (The relation between the two coreferential terms is thus the same as between the head nominal and NP_{rel} in a restrictive relative construction.) The syntactic function of the cleft-focused constituent is in the higher clause, it is predicative, determined by the structure of **it is** ___, just like the function of the head of a relative clause is determined by the sentence which contains it. It is through this predication that the focus of the sentence is identified.

Lastly, it must be pointed out that constraint (28), on the repetition of the predicate in the subordinate clause, is syntactically, but not lexically, determined. As Hazaël-Massieux 1983 points out, for a large number of creole lexical items it is the syntax of the sentence which determines whether they are being used nominally, predicatively, or otherwise. Thus, in the Guadeloupean French Creole example (29a), the item **nom** 'man' is repeated in the subordinate clause because it functions predicatively. On the other hand, there is no repetition in (29b) because the syntactic category of the gapped, coreferential term is the same as that of the cleft-focused constituent:

(29a) Se **nom** i nom.

He's [really] a man [now, (not a little boy any more)].

cf. (29b) Se **on nom** i we.

It's a man [that] he saw.

Sentence (29a) has a close counterpart in Gullah, even though the copula **da** is required here:

(30a) Də **man** i də man nau.

* De man i (də) ___ nau.

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